

REGIONAL INITIATIVES: ELIMINATING THE CAUSES OF TERRORISM

BY

COLONEL DAVID W. MAJOR
Washington Army National Guard

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Colonel David W. Major
Washington Army National Guard

Dr. James Gordon
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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The U.S. military is the only element of national power that has been funded to fulfill its responsibilities to defend the homeland from terrorists while buying time from being attacked by transnational terrorists. However, eliminating or reducing the underling causes of terrorism requires a regional approach and a full interagency effort to support counter-terrorism efforts in key nations and regions. These efforts should be coordinated and synchronized to improve the assisted nations' ability to provide good governance, including humanitarian rights, health care, information, governance, law enforcement, finance, and economic capabilities.

Successive U.S. administrations should direct relevant U.S. agencies and departments. These efforts should focus on long-term solutions and not on narrow-sighted and short-term military solutions. This strategic research paper will focus on regional initiatives to identify the region's nations' political, economic, security, and informational environments. Selected nations should then be empowered and resourced, with support drawn from the full spectrum of U.S. national power to provide a sustained long-term (25-50 years) program to eliminate transnational terrorist networks.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES: ELIMINATING THE CAUSES OF TERRORISM

Most terrorist safe havens sit astride national borders, in places like the Sulu Sea, the Northwest Frontier – and the Sahel. Terrorists use national borders to their advantage. Denying terrorist's safe haven therefore demands a regional response. For this reason building regional partnerships is the cornerstone of any enduring counterterrorism strategy. The United States seeks full partners, bilaterally and regionally, to engage the enemy with all the instruments of statecraft.¹

—Harry A. Crumpton,
United States Ambassador-at-large

This strategic research paper focuses on key regional initiatives powered to identify the region's states' political, economic, security, and informational environments. These initiatives should then be resourced along the full spectrum of U.S. national power to provide a long-term (25-50 years) program to eliminate transnational terrorist networks. Such a regional interagency approach will holistically focus the U.S. government's efforts in a region and encourage other nations to strategize regionally to address their mutual security concerns.²

U.S. country teams and at-risk host nations should use the frame work of regional initiatives, such as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative, to foster regional collaboration in developing a consolidated regional interagency response to reduce the breeding grounds of transnational terrorists. The collaboration should begin with a description of each nation's political, economic, security, and informational environments, along with a prioritized list of requirements. This process must be empowered and resourced within the full spectrum of national power to provide a long-term (25-50 years) program to eliminate the region's transnational terrorist networks.

Background

The U.S. military is the only element of power that is currently funded to fulfill its responsibilities to defend the homeland and buy the U.S. Government time against attacks by transnational terrorists. However the U.S. Government is doing little to assist key vulnerable nations to address the underlying causes of terrorism. A more effective U.S. strategy should focus our efforts on the “at-risk regions” involved, by strengthening the region’s nations’ human rights, health care, informational, governance, law enforcement, finance and economic capabilities while building better long-term bilateral and coalition relationships. Accordingly, future U.S. administrations should direct relevant departments and agencies to operate cooperatively, and focus on long-term regional solutions, not on narrow and short-term military solutions. Congress must support this long-term effort with the appropriate funding and legislation. The executive agencies should give Congress its basic requirements and priorities, by country and region, and then use the administration’s strategic communications capability to muster congressional support for critical regional initiatives.

The goals of the regional policy must be realistic, both financially and diplomatically, showing how the initiative will eliminate transnational terrorists’ breeding grounds. Many societies reduce their people’s exposure of vermin to humans by looking for long-term, cheap solutions to remove the vermin’s’ breeding grounds and to clean up high-risk areas. The U.S. needs to assist nation-states in doing the same with transnational terrorists. Over reliance on military solutions is like paying exterminators to constantly poison a neighborhood without first creating simple rodent reduction infrastructures by removing stagnant water, installing sewers, and offering hygiene education. Exterminators can provide short-term solutions, but their services are

expensive over the long-term: Vermin can develop immunity to their treatment, and the poison can kill the vermin's natural enemies, creating an even worse problem. Similarly, reducing the underlying causes and building the infrastructure now to deal with future generations of transnational terrorists, offers a greater future potential of eliminating potential non-state adversaries. Relying only on the military option may provide a short-term solution to the terrorist threat. But such solutions often create animosity between the U.S. and other nation-states. Sometimes military responses even create more terrorists.

Some contend that terrorism really is not the disease, but only a symptom of much larger problems, such as bad governance, and a sense of hopelessness in at-risk populations. Downsides of concentrating solely on the security concerns of the host nation without consideration for the nation's underlying problems could cause worse problems in the future. For example, focusing only on a nation's internal security could lend support to a corrupt dictator, leaving him in power without any incentive to alleviate internal problems by providing better governance and improving living conditions. Long-term solutions often require improving health care, education, the economy, information capabilities, governance, infrastructure, humanitarian issues, and law enforcement.

Regional Strategic Initiatives

In a January 2006 speech, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated:

Since its creation more than 350 years ago, the modern state system has rested on the concept of sovereignty. It was always assumed that every state could control and direct the threats emerging from its territory. It was also assumed that weak and poorly governed states were merely a burden to their people, or at most, an international humanitarian concern but never a true security threat.³

Today, however, these old assumptions no longer hold. Technology is collapsing the distance that once clearly separated right here from over there. And the greatest threats now emerge more within states than between them. The fundamental character of regimes now matters more than the international distribution of power⁴.

An empowered interagency process focused on regional strategic initiatives should begin with country teams charged with identifying the root causes of transnational terrorists in selected countries in a given region. These teams should then prioritize U.S. and regional coalition efforts to assist these nations in eliminating terrorist havens. With steady, non-intrusive U.S. support, over the next 2-3 generations the U.S. government can enable at-risk countries to be more self-supporting and better manage terrorist threats within their borders. The world will then be a safer place for our grandchildren. To launch this initiative, the U.S. interagency and the U.S. Congress should develop regional strategic initiatives.

These initiatives should include some key concepts by: “bringing to bear all the instruments of statecraft, in a calibrated fashion, through coordinated interagency strategy; creating a shared diagnosis as a basis for interagency self-synchronization; building trusted networks to displace enemy networks; promote field-driven interagency cooperation; and enable theater responses. A key concept is that the initiatives are driven by the country team and not driven by Washington based bureaus.”⁵

The U.S. should build upon and encourage further regional partnerships like the 2003 Pan Sahel Initiative and the current African Union’s Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative. It must then ensure that all of its recommendations are properly resourced. The smaller Pan Sahel Initiative included the central western African nations of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. It brought together full embassy

teams and government representatives from each of the partner governments. Participants compiled a prioritized list of requirements to reduce the underlying causes and conditions that compelled individuals to become terrorists or to support terrorist activities. However, this early initiative was constrained from its inception by limited funding; it focused primarily on our military's efforts, and especially the training for the host nations' counterterrorism forces. The Department of Defense was the only U.S. agency funded and resourced to accomplish any of the recommendations. Although the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) and State Department (DOS) representatives recommended that teaching English to the populations in the host nations would not cost much, but would provide a highly valued skill (economic, education, informational...), this program was neither resourced nor funded. On the other hand, lower priority Department of Defense programs were fully funded.⁶

Because of an over reliance on military solutions, initial regional initiatives accomplished little to eliminate the underlying causes or terrorist breeding grounds in these countries. The most visible mile-stone events were completions of training cycles of national level counterterrorism units in each of the partner nations. But the most significant and a valuable benefit was the development of trust among the states and establishing a foundation for future regional missions.⁷

Ambassador Crumpton emphasizes the complexity of this issue and the great need to develop trust between all actors to further state the mutual interests, when he said:

In the coming decades this conflict, waged in a rapidly evolving global society, will take twists and turns that nobody can predict, despite our best intelligence efforts. We must therefore prepare for uncertainty, as you are doing in this forum, by building a bond of understanding and trust. We will

need each other and we will need to trust more than ever. Trust, rooted in understanding, promotes information sharing and collective strategies.⁸

In 2006, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative superseded the Pan Sahel Initiative. It included the original members and added Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. This initiative's goals include: "Identifying key counterterrorism issues across a region; develop a common strategic approach to address counterterrorism issues; pool resources and tasks to generate unified effort across the U.S. Government; create an ongoing interagency partnership to address counterterrorism issues; form a basis for closer cooperation between partner nations; leverage resources from such partners as the G8 and other international organizations."⁹

These initiatives were developed by the interagency to develop long-term regional strategies to defeat the ability of terrorist organizations to recruit or otherwise receive support from within a region. These counterterrorism initiatives are being used by the U.S. and regional partners to provide assistance with detection, response and mitigation of terrorist threats throughout a region. These initiatives will also increase nations' capability to prevent terrorist attacks and consequence management. The goals of the initiatives seek to maximize the return on investment by implementing reforms to help nations become more self-reliant.¹⁰

The new Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism initiative is better funded, and adopts a more holistic approach. The U.S. will provide the full spectrum of its national power to support this regional initiative. The U.S. Military will continue to focus on military operations to improve each nation's counterterrorism capability. However, the other U.S. Government departments will be better funded to participate, but will they have

only limited manpower resources to supervise the program. For example, with no increase in manpower, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide increased educational initiatives; the State Department will aid the nation in airport security; and the Department of Treasury will increase its efforts to provide more effective money-handling controls in the region.

Long Term Goals and Use of Smart Power

The long-term goals of these initiatives should concentrate on satisfying both the countries' and region's requirements. When a regional initiative is first presented, the country teams representing all of the U.S. interagency and host-nations' representatives should meet as equal partners, in a start-up regional conference. The participants then identify mutually supporting efforts and needs; but, most importantly, they develop trust in the process. The U.S. Government needs to enter the conference with a long-term generational (25-year) regional strategy to assist the region with a carefully crafted mix of soft and hard power. This mix is called "smart power":¹¹

The Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, defines smart power as, neither hard nor soft – is it the skillful combination of both. Smart power means developing an integrated strategy, resource base, and tool kit to achieve American objectives, drawing on both hard and soft power. It is an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels to expand American influence and establish the legitimacy of American action.¹²

Regional Initiative's Goals

The overall goal of the U.S. Government's efforts should be to provide aid to at-risk populations to eliminate their support to transnational terrorists and to alleviate "hopelessness" within the community. This includes assisting in the development of

institutions that foster good governance. What in fact would make a difference? In most people's minds, anything that improves the future lives of their families and children. This includes improving health care, education, economy, access to positive information flow, good and responsive governance, better infrastructure, humanitarian issues, honest law enforcement, and judiciary. These institutions can reduce the incidence of terrorism and encourage citizens' buy-in to the government. Governments that lack these assets limit their citizens' political ability to legitimately influence the government, ineffective governance breeds corruption, reduces economic development, limits jobs, and creates an environment that is providing a breeding ground for terrorists. People without a job, or hope for the future, are likely to become criminals, drug producers, and terrorists. So the goal of encouraging honest and good governance in host governments has the dual objective of providing oversight of terrorist financing, and of reducing the at-risk population.

The U.S. should make a concerted effort to reduce regional tensions and internal tensions within vulnerable countries by laying the groundwork for reconciliation of mutual interests and improving institutional mechanisms vital to reducing this threat. Terrorism thrives on creating and encouraging conflict between peoples, thereby inciting violence and creating instability to further their cause. Terrorist activities reinforce hopelessness, which then enhances their recruiting activities.

We must de-legitimize terrorism and convince would-be terrorists that they have better options. The U.S. Government should be perceived as supporting the people, not the government that is failing its people. When the U.S. supports individual leaders, rather than the people and their nation, it frequently runs into trouble. Creating the right

impression will require the smart use of our and partner nation's full-spectrum of national power. We can assist our newest immigrant citizens to raise voices of moderation and persuade those still in their former lands to empower homeland moderates to encourage reform and economic progress.

The partner nations should target host nations' educational systems to improve the chances for the young to receive an enhanced liberal education, with a greater chance for a college education and job potential within the region. The goal is always to encourage some hope for a better future for the people. A liberal education increases peoples' understanding of government and empowers individual citizens to make lawful and peaceful changes to their government, by making it more responsive to its people.

This regional approach should be realistically presented as a generational or multi-generational solution. The U.S. should refrain from military solutions in support of governments that are making their best effort to improve their support of populations and practicing some level of good governance. This developmental process requires much time, patience, and the support to successive administrations that provide country teams that continue to support the long-term strategic goals.¹³

What Can the Separate Departments Provide?

Departments in the U.S. Government are all capable of providing support to this regional interagency approach to ensure regional stability and the region's national security. The State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism mission (C/CT) "is to forge partnerships with non-state actors, multilateral organizations, and foreign governments to advance the counterterrorism objectives and national security of the U.S. Working with our U.S. Government counterterrorism team, the C/CT takes a

leading role in developing coordinated strategies to defeat terrorist abroad and in securing the cooperation of international partners.”¹⁴

Department of Treasury’s Support to the Regional Initiatives

U.S. Treasury Under-Secretary Stuart Levey has stated:

Counterterrorism and security policy have traditionally been the province of foreign affairs, defense, intelligence, and law enforcement officials – not finance ministers. But finance ministries worldwide are now working closely with the traditional security ministries to meet the government's first responsibility: ensuring the safety of its citizens. Promoting a safe, sound, and secure financial system will enable us to work toward that end.¹⁵

The Department of the Treasury provides unique capabilities and valuable roles within the regional initiatives. Some of these include: “identifying typologies of terrorist and illicit financing that present systemic threats to the domestic and international financial system; strengthening and expanding international standards to address these vulnerabilities and to enhance transparency across the international financial system; facilitating compliance with international standards through comprehensive international anti-money laundering/counterterrorist financing assessments and technical assistance.”¹⁶

U.S. Agency for International Development's Supporting Role

Of all the agencies and departments, the most under-appreciated, under-utilized, under-resourced and misunderstood is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It doesn’t do anything dramatic like blowing up things like the Department of Defense, or perform international diplomacy like the State Department. USAID just does its job. In fact, it does a lot of the work that the State Department promises to do and the Defense Department does not want to do. It is a surprising fact that its current missions

coincide with most of the actions that the U.S. Government must take in order to reduce terrorists' breeding ground. On USAID's website is a pre-decisional document that recommends USAID continue supporting six specific missions in vulnerable countries in support of the U.S. Government's counterterrorism mission: promote democratic governance, drive economic growth, assist in emerging health needs, mitigating and managing conflict, providing humanitarian aid, and providing a full measure of private foreign aid.¹⁷

Economic Development as a Pillar of National Defense

In 2002, after the September 11th attacks on the New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., President Bush issued his National Security Strategy. In it he promoted development as one of the three pillars of national security.¹⁸ This was very surprising for a president that ran an election campaign against using the military to perform nation-building.¹⁹ At the time, 124 of 200 countries were reported to be democracies, but many of them were fragile.²⁰ In a January 16, 2002 speech, to the Organization of American States, President Bush emphasized the importance of better governance when he declared:

Success in the global economy comes to countries that maintain fiscal discipline, open their borders to trade, privatize inefficient state enterprises, deregulate their domestic markets and invest in the health and education of their people.

Four of USAID's eight primary missions (promote democratic governance, drive economic growth, assist in changing health needs, and providing humanitarian aid) are supported by the President's Millennium Challenge Account established in 2004. Since January 2004 (as of January 2008) the President's Millennium Challenge Account has

funded \$5.9 billion to support these missions. Part of its funding (\$500 million) is designated to specifically support the economic and redevelopment efforts of countries involved in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative. The Account is currently managed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, distributed on the principle that the aid is most effective when reinforced by good governance, economic freedom, and investments in people. The fund should reduce global poverty through the promotion of sustainable economic growth.²¹ Its intent is to help bolster those fragile, but truly democratic governments by providing aid to assist them to be more responsive to their population to be less corrupt, to improve their economy, and to provide for their own security. The initiative is based on the proposition that countries ruling justly, investing in their people, and encouraging economic freedom will receive more U.S. aid and that eliminating global poverty is in our national interest.²²

Support Better Governance

In December 2005, the Organization of Islamic States issued its Mecca Declaration supporting better governance, specifically declaring that:

Consultation, justice, and equality in its drive to achieve good governance widen political participation, establish the rule of law, protect human rights, apply social justice, transparency, and accountability, fight corruption, and build civil society institutions²³

USAID's first mission is to support host nations' efforts to provide better governance. In order to shape the efforts of vulnerable nations to develop better governance systems and infrastructure, the USAID recommends that aid should be given in the following circumstances: If the host nation has the political will to provide better governance, assistance must be tied to performance. Reform should be

encouraged through predictable and meaningful rewards. Governments that follow through by initiating true democratic processes and painful economic reforms should receive greater aid to encourage further progress. Further, governments successfully controlling corruption and empowering the rule of law should be rewarded publicly and financially. All of these incentives should be based on the host nation's actions, not just on what they say.²⁴

As a general rule, governments unwilling to reform or those that show no progress towards developing better governance should receive no further aid until they can demonstrate progress. The U.S. Government can use its influence in the World Bank and other developmental banks to deny assistance to governments that fail to show improvement. Diplomatically, the U.S. should convince third party (state and non-state) donors to join in this effort to reform bad governments. The U.S. Government's efforts are futile if someone else is willing to provide the aid without requiring the host government to improve its governance.²⁵ For example, the Chinese government as a rule provides support without interfering with a host nation's method of rule. This could potentially frustrate U.S. efforts to encourage a host nation to improve.

Drive Economic Growth

The second mission supported by USAID is to assist populations to develop their economies. Long-term economic growth has proven throughout history to provide a way of assisting and empowering a population on all socioeconomic levels. But how can poor countries without natural resources build their economy? This is very difficult and painful. It isn't as simple as sending money. It requires constant supervision,

overcoming institutional challenges, religious intolerance, mistrust (both of the government and others), poor education, and other cultural challenges.

These difficulties are a key reason that the regional initiatives should be bottom-driven, simply a single U.S. administration's pet policy. The country teams, with their boots on the ground should know what needs to be done to positively influence a host nation. In many areas, supporting education and assisting the population to become agriculturally independent can be the right path to long-term economic growth. In other nations, inequitable land ownership may be stifling the economy, so land reforms are in order. Care must be taken not to promote economic development that will not support long-term growth, that is culturally unacceptable, or that is merely trendy.²⁶

Increasing agricultural development and production can provide many benefits to a host nation such as, agricultural independence, reducing the cost of food to the population, reducing reliance on foreign humanitarian aid and greater self-determination. Foreign aid can further this development in three ways: by providing better technology and better agricultural planning, by providing capital resources to make the populations to more easily obtain low-cost loans and other necessary resources, and by assisting in the development of rural educational systems. This combined effort, supporting a population striving to dig itself out of poverty and a government that is moving to be more responsive to its population, can be the basis for building long-term economic growth that is sustainable and socially acceptable.²⁷

Improve Health Care

USAID's third mission is based on the proposition that the lack of even the most basic health care can deprive a people of hope. This is even more pronounced in a

population that lacks basic sanitation and education and that suffers from widespread tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and increased infant mortality. In Africa, these prevalent conditions challenge the international community. Foreign health care aid must include a full complement of ways and means. Healthier food, better education, environmental cleanup, more responsive financial institutions, job benefits, and a solid communications infrastructure could contribute more to long-term solutions to Africans' health problems than more narrowly focused government programs.

The failure of 40 years of international efforts to reduce high infant mortality, low life expectancy, and increasingly high HIV and AIDS rates shows that donor states and non-state actors must “develop new approaches, and better define the role of the private sector.”²⁸

In the past, the international humanitarian community has been more committed to the quantity, rather than the quality, of African healthcare. History has shown that poorly run health care is a waste of effort and resources. When it fails to provide aseptic conditions, the system actually spreads disease and decreases life expectancy. Increasing the quality of medical care will actually reduce the overall costs by shortening hospitalizations. This is true in all environments, but especially in the third world where resources are severely limited. Focusing on quality can reduce the waste associated with multiple poorly designed facilities. The U.S. is a leader in health care and quality assurance in part because of its efforts to reduce costs and improve public education.²⁹

Mitigating and Managing Conflict

The fourth USAID goal requires it to use its resources to assist nations and regions to mitigate and manage conflict. A survey of global conflicts quickly confirms

that ongoing internal and external conflicts are greater threats to life than the terrorist threats that have preoccupied the U.S. since 9/11. But do these conflicts serve perhaps to contribute to the terrorist threat? The ongoing strife between India and Pakistan creates a breeding ground for terrorists and extremists. In Sudan, government-sanctioned militias have killed 200,000 to 400,000 of its own citizens in a conflict that has bled over into neighboring Chad.³⁰

So, regional initiatives must consider the role of conflict mitigation and avoidance very early in the process. Some funding and diplomatic efforts to avoid a conflict can greatly reduce the long-term costs of ignoring a festering issue. To defuse volatile situations, the parties should prioritize the reasons for the conflict. Of course, there are different reasons for each conflict. The India-Pakistan dispute centers on the Himalayan territory of Kashmir.³¹ In Sudan, the conflict centers on rights to land and water between Arabs and Blacks.³² Whatever the cause, resolving these matters peacefully require mutual trust in forums that can develop new and permanent solutions acceptable to regional, national, and local parties of the issue.³³

A fully integrated interagency regional approach is the best way to resolve a conflict. Diplomatic, informational, military and economic efforts should be coordinated to provide effective foreign assistance. A struggling country's needs to be better addressed to encourage good governance, promote economic growth, improve institutional healthcare, provide conflict mitigation and humanitarian aid. Governmental support must be coordinated with private, non-governmental institutions. Each conflict within at-risk regions must be studied individually, and then analyzed in the context of the entire region. We should not assume that some issues are more relevant to the

conflict than others. Avoiding snap judgments are probably the most important principle to keep in mind when designing a country program.”³⁴

Though there are limitations on what foreign assistance can do, it is worth the effort and resources to promote peace. Given the historic relationship between some actors, it may be impossible to eliminate the causes and peace certainly cannot be dictated:

Conflict is ultimately the product of deep grievance and ambition, reckless leadership, zero sum competition over political and economic power, weak or unaccountable institutions, and regional and global pressures. What is required is a change in attitudes and power inside a country and the will to address these issues. While a range of policy tools can help in this task, it is important to recognize that most of what we are able to do is at the margins—and will take years to accomplish.³⁵

All aid is political, particularly in countries at high risk for conflict.³⁶ This is most applicable in a Third World resource-poor environment. Aid, or the lack thereof, can create positive and negative unintended results. The difficult job is to manage these assets while keeping an eye on regional, state, and local actors. First, no harm should be done. But that doesn’t mean doing nothing. It means actors should think carefully about the consequences before taking any initiatives. Further, actions should always try to support the host nation’s strategic goals, especially when they coincide with our own.³⁷

Providing Humanitarian Aid and Coordinating the Full Measure of Assistance

Providing humanitarian aid and coordinating the full measure of assistance are USAID’s fifth and sixth missions in supporting the regional initiatives. They are mutually supporting and inextricably interconnected. Future needs to provide acute and sustained humanitarian assistance will not go away; they will more than likely increase

in proportion as the population increases. Coordinating humanitarian assistance will become even more complex as more state and non-state actors become involved in providing aid in their own ways. Regional initiatives can provide a capability to coordinate a regional approach to humanitarian assistance. Currently, the \$9.9 billion of humanitarian aid provided by the U.S. Government pales in comparison to the 33.6 billion provided by private citizens, religious and voluntary organizations, and companies that contributes to international relief efforts. The U.S. Government should coordinate its activities because its unparalleled global reach will enable it to be seen as a power addressing global crises and a force for the greater good.³⁸

Department of Defense Initiatives

Past regional initiatives have been poorly funded and resourced. The only U.S. department resourced to fulfill its obligations has been the Department of Defense, (DOD) which led to over reliance on the U.S. military to execute foreign policy. At times, the Combatant Commanders and DOD have been the leading contributors and executors of U.S. regional policy. Empowered and resourced regional initiatives should redress this imbalance by bringing all departments to the conference table at the same time, with adequate resourcing to contribute to long-term security programs. These initiatives should be led by the U.S. ambassadors, planned and coordinated by the country teams, and empowered by all relevant U.S. departments. Resources should be more appropriately distributed and activities that support a region's strategic goals should be funded accordingly. Activities that provide short-term benefits but do not support strategic goals should be left out of the program. A restrained military response should accomplish its counterterrorism missions by using low profiled, networked, small

footprint, and capability-building forces. It will perform its missions, build host nation capabilities, and then leave to keep from undermining the host nation's government. The U.S. can provide intelligence support to assist host nations in developing their capabilities and then allow the host nation to take care of its own internal problems.

The Department of Defense will continue to support engagement activities that will support the region's full range of security and cooperation programs recommended by the initiatives, but in a very low keyed manner, that enables host nations to build on the experience and take credit for its successful missions.

Empowering the Ambassador

Regional initiatives and the flexibility the Millennium Challenge Account will empower the U.S. ambassador and the country teams to be more responsive to vulnerable nations. Through regional initiatives and as the President's representative to the country, ambassadors should be in a better position to truly shape the U.S. policy and host nation's development in support of strategic goals of good governance, humanitarian rights, regional security, and economic development.

Summary

Using regional strategic initiatives and empowered interagency processes should enable selected country teams to identify the root causes of transnational terrorists. It should prioritize U.S. and regional coalition efforts to assist host nation's development across all stages of better governance, economic development, humanitarian rights, and increased security capabilities. Terrorism thrives on creating and encouraging conflict between peoples, using violence and instability to further their cause. Terrorist activities reinforce hopelessness, which improves their recruiting activities. The current

trend of reducing manning of the U.S. interagency staff that works within the international community will have a substantial adverse effect on this program and will impede the capability of the U.S. Government to respond adequately to emerging missions.

The U.S. should build upon and encourage further regional partnerships, such as the 2003 Pan-Sahel Initiative and the current African Union's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative, ensuring that all of its recommendations are properly resourced. These initiatives will also increase supported nations' capability to prevent terrorist attacks and to manage consequences of such attacks. These initiatives seek to maximize the return on U.S. investments by promoting reforms to help nations become more self-reliant.³⁹

Initiatives that are not properly resourced with a balanced approach will do little to counter the hostile environments in these countries. If the military is the only tool used, it may do more harm than good, especially if it is seen as propping up a dictator without any effort to encourage a better form of government. Indeed, empowering one government over a regional rival could actually contribute to regional instability.⁴⁰

These initiative's goals should be tailored to the region, but support the overarching strategy of, "Identifying key counterterrorism issues across a region; develop a common strategic approach to address counterterrorism issues; pool resources and tasks to generate unified effort across the U.S. Government; create an ongoing interagency partnership to address counterterrorism issues; form a basis for closer cooperation between partner nations; leverage resources from such partners as the G8 and other international organizations."⁴¹

Future initiatives should be formulated around the key concepts of, coordinating all the tools of statecraft and operating in concert through a collaborative and regional interagency approach that moves nations toward forms of better governance. Such initiatives create a common operating picture among all U.S. departments and build networks that will displace extremists' networks. Lastly, they enable the U.S. country teams to deliver U.S. support, rather than the top-driven, bureau based system that is currently in place.⁴²

We envision a multi-faceted, multi-year strategy aimed at defeating terrorist organizations by helping to strengthen regional counterterrorism capabilities, by enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation between your security forces and ours and *most* importantly, by promoting economic development, good governance, education, liberal institutions, and democracy. Through broad policy success, we discredit terrorist ideology and deny them the recruits they need, while providing erstwhile recruits opportunity and hope.⁴³

The usual process of ignoring or failing to identify the root causes of terrorism and using the military to attack it when we think we see it, is similar to a medical doctor constantly performing surgery on cancerous tumors without treating the precancerous growths or their underlying causes.

Endnotes

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